Congratulations. You have mastered the Basics of the Nav Rules and are closing in on passing the Nav Rules. There is one ‘little’ barrier; the dreaded Exceptions.

At first glance, it seems that there are more Exceptions than Rules. Don’t Panic. All you want to do is pass the exam, not practice Maritime Law.

First of all, there are tons of Exceptions in the Rules but only 20% in the exam questions. You don’t have to be perfect on these; in fact, you only have get little better than half. This is a Multiple Guess exam so you can almost pass with an intelligent guessing strategy!

Since you know the Basics, you will recognize the “weird” questions. After we practice a bit you will recognize some of the questions and know the answer. You don’t have to know the answer verbatim; you just need a ‘trigger’; for example, the question about where do INLAND rules apply has a really long answer in the Rules but your trigger is “Great Lakes”. If you know the answer, fine. If you don’t know the answer, read the choices and see if any combination of words strikes a bell. If all else fails, eliminate the silly choices and guess. For example, some of the questions list “flare-up light” as a choice. Duh! Every heard of a “flare-up light”?

Here we go. Many exceptions deal with lengths of the boat or length of the tow. Everything is in meters* and the key numbers for boat lengths are 7, 12, 20, 50 and 100. The only length for a tow line is 200 meters. That sounds like a lot but let’s break them down in a way that is easy to remember without the details at first. *If you see only feet, convert to meters by 1 m ~ 3 ft.

7 meters is considered a tiny boat and is exempt from almost everything. 100 meters is a really big boat and has to have all sorts of extra stuff.

50 meters applies only to masthead lights and essentially says that boats 50 meters and longer have to have two masthead lights, the one aft being higher. Boats under 50 meters only need one masthead light but can have two if they so choose. Sailing and Fishing Vessels do not have masthead lights.

12 and 20 meters are the “hard” ones. INLAND rules say that boats over 12 meters need a whistle and a bell. INTERNATIONAL rules say that a boat between 12 and 20 meters does NOT have to have a bell. Naturally, this exempts those boats from certain rules involving a bell since they don’t have to have one. 12 meters is sort of in-between and is exempt from some things and not others.

200 meters applies to tows (i.e. tow lines longer than 200 meters) need extra lights.

Rather than memorize the rules and try to figure out the answer to each question it is more efficient to look at questions that illustrate the exceptions. These convey the idea just as well and have the advantage that you may remember the question or at least recognize a ‘trigger’.

Later, we will discuss exceptions for lights and sounds that apply to certain types of vessels such as fishing vessels. Remember, fishing vessels are commercial fishing vessels. Trawlers are different from other fishing vessels (that is true even for the Basic lights).

This is a work in progress and has not been tested by previous classes.
Exceptions due to LENGTH

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - A vessel less than 7 meters (23 feet) long, anchored where vessels normally don't navigate, is ________

A required to exhibit a flare-up light __________
B required to carry a portable white light __________
C required to exhibit an anchor light "Basics” apply unless there is an exception
D not required to exhibit an anchor light an exception to “Basics”

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - A power-driven vessel towing with a 150-meter stern tow SHALL exhibit __________

A three masthead lights in a vertical line
B two towing lights in a vertical line
C an all-around red light over an all-around white light at the masthead
D a towing light in a vertical line above the sternlight
(This is not really an exception since 150 meters is less than 200 meters but it could throw you.)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - Power-driven vessels less than 12 meters (39.4 ft) in length MAY exhibit

A an all-around white light instead of a masthead light forward and a sternlight
B one all-around white light and no sidelights
C sidelights and a sternlight on a combination lantern at the masthead
D an all-around flashing yellow light

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - Of the vessels listed, which one MUST exhibit both a forward and an after masthead light when making way?

A A 55-meter sailing vessel
B A 65-meter vessel engaged in fishing, other than trawling
C A 45-meter vessel towing astern
D A 75-meter vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver
(Masthead lights are only for power driven vessels so your choices are C or D. The cutoff between one and two masthead lights is 50 meters.)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - Vessels over 12 meters in length, at anchor in restricted visibility, SHALL sound signals

A at intervals of not more than one minute
B at intervals of not more than two minutes
C only when being approached by another vessel
D only when vessels are in sight of one another

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - Vessels over 12 meters in length, at anchor in restricted visibility, SHALL sound signals

A only when vessels are in sight of one another does not apply at anchor
B only when being approached by another vessel nonsense
C at intervals of not more than two minutes less than 12 meters
D at intervals of not more than one minute ring bell every minute
(These are NOT exceptions but could trick you. Vessels less than 12 meters don’t have to ring a bell but they do have to give some sound signal every TWO minutes, not ONE minute. Nasty.)
INLAND ONLY - A 10-meter vessel proceeding under sail and machinery ______
A displays one cone, apex downward  **WRONG; this is for 12 meters or more.**
B displays a basket
C *isn't required* to display a shape
D displays a ball

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND Which vessel would display a cone, apex downward?
A A fishing vessel with outlying gear
**B A vessel proceeding under sail and machinery**  **Rule 25(e)**
C A vessel engaged in diving operations
D A vessel being towed

INLAND ONLY - Which of the listed vessels would be EXEMPT from exhibiting anchor lights or shapes, while at anchor in a "special anchorage area" designated by the Secretary?
A A 22-meter sailboat
B A 25-meter tug
**C A 17-meter Coast Guard buoy-boat**
D A 300-foot Naval warship

*(The cutoff is under 20 meters Suppose you did not know this. The only cutoffs are 7 m, 12 m & 20 meters. Do you see anything that could be 7 or 12? OK, it had to be 20 meters.)*

INLAND ONLY - A 15-meter power-driven vessel, at anchor in a "special anchorage area" designated by the Secretary, MUST sound which signal?
A Rapid ringing of a bell for 5 seconds, every minute  **“Basic” signal**
**B None, Because of her size, she is exempt**
C Three blasts on her whistle, short - prolonged – short  **optional warning signal**
D Rapid ringing of the bell for 5 seconds, every two minutes  **never right**

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND - During daylight hours, a vessel being towed astern, on a tow that exceeds 200 meters, will display ____________
A two cones with their apexes together
**B one diamond**
C one cone with its apex upward
D one ball

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND Which vessel is directed not to impede the passage of a vessel which can only navigate inside a narrow channel?
A A *vessel of less than 20 meters in length.*  **Rule 9(b)**
B A vessel not under command
C A vessel engaged in surveying
D All of the above

Special cases, often just for INLAND ONLY

INLAND ONLY - Passing agreements made by whistle signals apply to ______
A power-driven vessels in sight of each other  **International**
**B power-driven vessels in sight of each other, when meeting or crossing within ½ mile**
C all types of vessels, when within a mile of each other  **close but no cigar**
D all types of vessels, when not in sight of one another  **nonsense**
INLAND ONLY - Your powerboat is in a head-on situation with another power-driven vessel. To comply with U.S. Inland Rules, you MUST
A exchange one short blast, and the give-way vessel must turn to starboard no give-way
B exchange one short blast, and both vessels must turn to starboard Inland Rules
C exchange two short blasts, and both vessels turn to port don’t turn to port
D sound the danger signal and take all way off there is no danger
(INLAND signal intent and exchange signals, INTERNATIONAL just signal when executing.)

INLAND ONLY - If a vessel being overtaken agrees with the whistle signal of an overtaking vessel, she SHALL sound
A four blasts in succession; prolonged - short - prolonged - short
B a similar sound signal
C five short rapid blasts
D one short blast

A question similar to this may be the following which I just made up.
INTERNATIONAL ONLY - If a vessel being overtaken in a narrow channel agrees with the whistle signal of an overtaking vessel, she SHALL sound
A four blasts in succession; prolonged - short - prolonged - short
B a similar sound signal
C five short rapid blasts
D one short blast

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND A sailing vessel is proceeding along a narrow channel and can safely navigate ONLY inside the channel. The sailing vessel approaches a vessel engaged in fishing in the narrow channel. Which statement is TRUE?
A Each vessel should move to the edge of the channel on her port side.
B The vessels are required to exchange signals.
C The fishing vessel is directed not to impede the passage of the sailing vessel.Rule 18(c)(ii)
D Each vessel should be displaying signals for a vessel constrained by her draft.

INLAND ONLY A vessel proceeding downstream in a narrow channel on the Western Rivers sights another vessel moving upstream. Which vessel has the right of way?
A The vessel moving upstream against the current.
B The vessel moving downstream with a following current. Rule 14(d)
C The vessel located more towards the channel centerline.
D The vessel sounding the first whistle signal.
(Right of Way DOES NOT EXIST except on the Western Rivers or Great Lakes.)

INLAND ONLY A power-driven vessel operating in a narrow channel with a following current on the Great Lakes or Western Rivers is meeting an upbound vessel. Which statement is TRUE?
A The downbound vessel has the right of way. Rule 9(a)(ii)
B The upbound vessel must initiate the required maneuvering signals.
C The downbound vessel must propose the manner of passing.
D All of the above.
INLAND ONLY  Which is a characteristic of a special flashing light?
A  It is required for all vessels being pushed ahead as part of a composite unit
B  It must show through an arc of not less than 180° nor more than 225°  Rule 21(g)
C  It must be of the same character and construction as the masthead light
D  All of the above
(There are some questions which are hopeless unless you happen to know them.  Don’t worry.  Just take a wild guess and go on.  The one above is the type of question that stops 100%.)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND  You hear the fog signal of another vessel forward of your beam.  Risk of collision may exist.  You MUST ______________
A  begin a radar plot
B  stop your engines
C  take all way off, if necessary  Rule 8(e)
D  All of the above.
(These are good examples of how to answer a question correctly without knowing anything.  Here ‘radar plot’ is silly because not everyone has radar.  Therefore, D is also wrong.  It would be crazy to require anyone to stop engines.  Much the same for the next question.  There any reference to a specific number of knots for speed can’t be universal.  In both cases, you eliminated three silly answers without memorizing anything.)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND  You are on watch in the fog. Your vessel is proceeding at a safe speed when you hear a fog signal ahead of you.  The Rules require you to navigate with caution and, if danger of collision exists, ______________
A  slow to less than 2 knots
B  stop your engines
C  reduce to bare steerageway  Rule 8(e)
D  begin a radar plot

Exceptions for Fishing or Sailing Vessels
INLAND ONLY  A vessel which is fishing must show sidelights and a sternlight only when ____
A  anchored
B  underway
C  dead in the water
D  underway and making way  Rule 26(c)(iii)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND  A vessel engaged in fishing, and at anchor, shall show ______
A  an anchor light
B  sidelights and a sternlight
C  three lights in a vertical line, the highest and lowest being red, and the middle being white
D  None of the above  Rule 26(a)
(Fishing vessels use the same lights underway or at anchor)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND  Additional light signals are provided in the Annexes to the Rules for vessels ______
A  engaged in fishing  Annex II
B  not under command
C  engaged in towing
D  under sail
INTERNATIONAL & INLAND A vessel engaged in fishing while at anchor shall sound a fog signal of ______________
A one prolonged and three short blasts at one minute intervals
B a rapid ringing of the bell for five seconds at one minute intervals
C one prolonged and two short blasts at two minute intervals Rule 35(c)
D a sounding of the bell and gong at one minute intervals.

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND Which vessel must sound her fog signal at intervals not to exceed one minute?
A A power-driven vessel underway, not making way
B A vessel constrained by her draft
C A vessel engaged in fishing, at anchor
D A vessel aground Rule 35(h)
(The interval for the other situations is every TWO minutes.)

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND A sailing vessel underway at night MAY show ________
A a green light over a red light (red over green OK)
B a red light over a white light
C two white lights at the stern
D None of the above Rule 25(c)

INTERNATIONAL ONLY Which vessel would NOT sound a fog signal of one prolonged and two short blasts?
A A vessel not under command
B A vessel constrained by her draft (CBD unique to International)
C A vessel being towed Rule 35(e)
D A vessel sailing

INTERNATIONAL & INLAND If your vessel is underway in fog and you hear one prolonged and three short blasts, this is a ______
A vessel not under command
B sailing vessel
C vessel being towed (manned) Rule 35(e)
D vessel being towed (unmanned)

A good review may be “SampleQuestionsByType”.